

IRAQI DESTINY

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Running on empty... Fuel shortage reaches crisis level

Spc. Blake Kent
22nd MPAD

Electrical power, transportation, and the lack of a pumped supply of raw fuel perpetuates the propane and benzene crisis in Mosul.

"One turbine out of five is operational in Baiji," said Lt. Col. Darcy Brewer, Knoxville, Tenn., executive officer, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). It just isn't enough energy to run the refineries."

The shortage of fuel, which began dipping into Iraq's reserve supplies, has now reached a crisis level.

"We have three days or less of propane and benzene to sell," Brewer said, "but we're hoping we can start flowing them in the next two weeks."

Conservation is encouraged in the interim period.

"We are doing what we can, but the people will have to conserve what they have," Brewer said. "A typical bottle of propane should last a family about ten days."

Once the refineries restart their full operations, the supply to Mosul will return to normal.

"We have engineers and local civilians in Baiji working to get the power back up," said 2nd Lt. Raul Pedilla, Compton, Calif., 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Abn. Div. (AAslt.).

About 40 tons of propane can come per car by train, and benzene can be pumped up through fuel lines from Baiji to Hammam Al-Alil, which is the distribution point for fuel to Mosul and the surrounding area.

Problems with black-market sales of propane and benzene have also caused problems for a fair distribution of fuel for the people.

"We've put a number of controls in place to afford all people an equal shot at fuel," said Lt. Col. Stephen E. Bruch of Richmond, Va., commander, 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf. Rgt. We regulate the prices and use each family's census stamp as a rationing card, so everyone can get fuel."

Benzene sales on the black-market causes a larger shortage for people in need of fuel, and in turn the necessity to pay higher prices for black-market fuel.

Fuel is siphoned from cars, put into bottles, sold on the side of the street.

"We run patrols that interdict

people that would sell benzene out of bottles on the side of the road," Bruch said.

Systems of benzene distribution are in place making it fair for everyone needing fuel.

According to Brewer, there is a 25 dinar per liter limit at the benzene stations, which re-establishes the pre-war prices. No carry-around fuel cans are permitted.

"We established an even/odd system to keep the lines shorter. On even numbered days the people with even numbered license plate numbers can get fuel, and on odd days the people with odd numbered plates get fuel," Brewer said.

Emergency and police vehicles are given priority at the benzene pumps, Brewer said.



Spc. Blake Kent

A soldier with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) regulates the flow of traffic at a local gas station. The supply of gasoline is reaching a critical low and will soon run out.

Cache arms Mosul police

Spc. Blake Kent
22nd MPAD

A weapons cache found April 29 at a weapons factory was turned into the Mosul Police Department instead of being destroyed.

"Right around 500 rifles of various types were turned in," said Houston, Texas native, Pfc. John Blanton, 101st Military Police Company, 716th MP Battalion. "We've been getting serial numbers on the weapons recorded, then the weapons will be turned over to the Mosul Police Department to be issued out to the policemen."

"Luckily the weapons are off the streets now and out of the hands of the looters, thieves and thugs that want to get their hands on them," said Scarborough, Maine native, Sgt. 1st Class Garth

MacDonald, 2nd Platoon, 101st MP Co., 716th MP Bn.

"Pretty much every type of weapon in the AK family is here, from AK-47s to the sniper rifle version."

The Mosul Police Department is rebuilding in post-war Iraq and found they were critically short on weaponry.

"They're better now, and these weapons will help, but it was pretty critical for a while," MacDonald said. "They were dealing with criminals that were better armed than they were."

Now the police have the means to fight back.

"If all the civilians are going to have AKs, then the police should have them too," Blanton said.

Joint operations continue in Mosul to collect weapons and lower the abilities of local criminals to wreak havoc on the citizens.



Spc. Blake Kent

A soldier inspects an AK-47 found in a weapons cache. The weapons were later turned over to the local police.

Healing Iraq with pencils not bullets

Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis
22nd MPAD

"Americans have jails better than some of these school rooms," said Chap. (Maj.) Carlos Huerta, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Children work in classrooms that are dark with long, wooden benches.

The instructor stands at the black

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Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

Honey (center), smiles after she was given school supplies from soldiers of Company A, 1st Bn., 320th FA Rgt., on May 3. The donation of school supplies was bought off the local economy in Mosul.

Iraqi Destiny Staff

OIC
Maj. Charmaine Means

NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Eric Hendrix

Editor
Sgt. Jason L. Austin

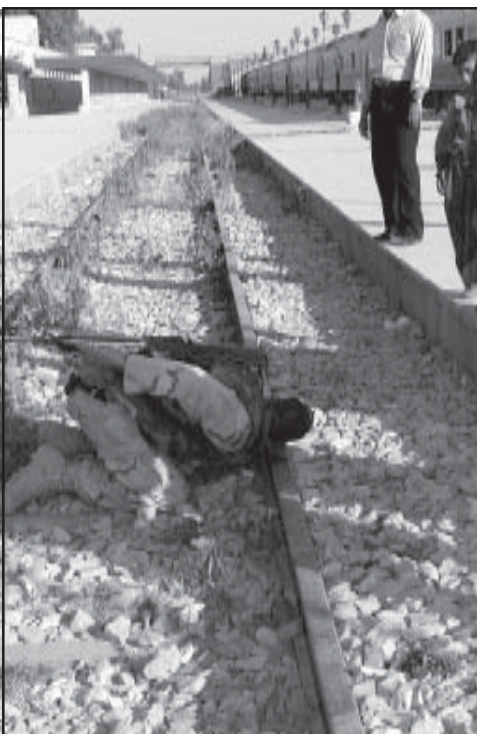
Staff
Pfc. Joshua Hutcheson
Spc. Blake Kent
Spc. Joshua M. Risner
Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

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A little humor from the streets



photos by Spc. Blake Kent



Just a few scenes off the Mosul streets for viewing pleasure. (Top) Two Iraqi boys pose with a U.S. soldier's kevlar helmet. (Left) A soldier puts his ear to the tracks to listen and see if the train will be coming soon. (Below) Even in the city, livestock are prevalent and even seem at home. This sheep appears to be curious of the strangely dressed person pointing a camera at it. (Right) An Iraqi child makes a gesture with his hand as if to say "Fuhgeddaboutit." What he actually said and meant is unknown at this time.



SCHOOL continued from page 2

board in front of the classroom with tiny pieces of chalk trying to teach children using as little of the precious material as possible.

The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) is using its operating funds to obtain materials for the schools off the local economy assisting as many schools in the Mosul area as possible.

"Unless we fix the children here, our children will have to come back," Huerta said. "Let's fix Iraq with pencils not bullets." Huerta is the chaplain who oversees the schools in the western side of Mosul.

Some headmasters and teachers in Mosul say expendable supplies are not the only thing they're having problems with. There are some schools in the area that still have ordnance in their yards, no electricity and no fuel for the teachers to get work.

Since the issues are things like fuel, electricity and ordnance, it will take time. The soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) are working on these everyday. They've been guarding fuel from the black market, bringing electricians in to

repair bad electric lines and taking the explosives from the reach of the children of Mosul.

Ahmad Mubarak, headmaster at Al Nahrawan primary school in Mosul, said, "We really appreciate the assistance the soldiers are giving us. It helps our children a great deal."

Kids grow up here taught by their families that an education is not important because even highly educated people in Iraq don't get paid much, he said.

It's important for the children to have school supplies; they need to have encouragement and an influence to come to school. These donations are a way for them to want to come to school, said Radia Kziy, a school teacher at Al Nahrawan primary school.

There are many things that need to be repaired when dealing with the school system in Iraq, but the chore will come in figuring out what comes first.

"We have to prioritize what it's going to take to get the schools up and running," said Sgt. 1st Class Rocky Upchurch, noncommissioned officer in charge of the Public Education Team for Mosul, Iraq. Seats for the children, gas for transportation, electricity for the schools and notepads, pencils and chalk to teach with are a few of the items that are being worked on now.

Upchurch, a school teacher himself and a soldier with 431st Civil Affairs Battalion from Lubbock, Tx., said even though some of the schools in Mosul and the surrounding areas are having difficulties opening; there are headmasters that say they're ready to go.

Saddam's regime handicapped the Iraqi school systems by not providing them with the financial requirements to function properly.

Huerta, a professor of mathematics and Hebrew at Westpoint, said, "Poverty is interesting; it gives the same pain all over the world."

He said there is poverty all over the world, and this is a chance that we've been given as a nation to make a difference in the world. By helping the children here in Iraq the world will benefit in the years ahead.



Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

1st Lt. Vance J. O'Neil Company A, 1st Bn., 320th FA Rgt., hands out school supplies like pencils, erasers and paper May 3 to children in the Al Nahrawan primary school in Mosul, Iraq. A company bought school supplies for a local Mosul school off of the local economy.

Arabic Expressions

English		Arabic
stop	=	o-guf
danger	=	kha-tar
weapons	=	as-leh-ha
be careful	=	deer-ba-luck
boy	=	Wa-lad
girl	=	bnaya
near	=	g-reeb
far	=	ba-eed
come here	=	ta-al

Chaplains Corner

Life always has its problems, but is that any reason to stop living it as fully as you possibly can? The Bible and the Koran both tell us that as long as we are living we will have problems. Things are never perfect, but is that any reason to be less than the best you can be?

Life is calling you today, calling you to live its richness.

What are you waiting for? Now is a moment that's like no other.

Sure, it has its challenges and problems, yet it also has so very much more.

Life is calling you today, calling you to make a difference.